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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PINS](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: ABU GHRAIB PRISON TRANSFERRED TO GOI, FUTURE USE
TO BE DETERMINED

Classified By: Political Counselor Margaret Scobey, for reasons 1.4 (b)
and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) This is a PRT Al Anbar cable.

[1](#)2. (C) SUMMARY: Effective September 1, 2006, responsibilities for securing and administering Abu Ghraib prison transferred to an on-site Iraq Army unit and Ministry of Justice officials. A platoon of U.S. Marines will remain at the location until mid-September, to help support security efforts. The acting prison warden told Al Anbar PolOff August 30 that GOI officials had not yet determined the future use of the facility. He noted that repairs would be made on the facility and that "if security in Iraq stabilizes, we might continue to use it as a prison." All options would be examined over the upcoming six months. The last groups of detainees were transferred to Baghdad's Camp Cropper in late July and early August [1](#)2006. END SUMMARY.

ABU GHRAIB TRANSFER COMPLETE;
FUTURE USE TO BE DETERMINED

[1](#)3. (C) Al Anbar PolOff and Marine Regimental Combat Team 5 Commanding Officer visited Abu Ghraib Prison August 30, 2006, to confirm handover arrangements with IA officers and MoJ officials. The transfer became official September 1, with primary security responsibilities for the attack-prone site given to an IA unit that had previously been stationed in the Fallujah area. A previously assigned four-person military transition team (MTT, U.S. Army) will continue to mentor and train IA soldiers at Abu Ghraib for the duration of the IA unit's assignment there - at least through the end of 2006. A separate platoon of Marines will remain on location through mid-September to facilitate the transition. NOTE: the original plan for Abu Ghraib's security centered on MoJ's assumption of responsibilities. MoJ officials were unable to deliver resources, so MNF-W had to deploy CF and IA units to the site, reducing security effectiveness in areas east of Fallujah. END NOTE.

[1](#)4. (C) Overall administrative functions will be handled by an MoJ team, which will number approximately 100 persons rotating in and out of the prison in coming months. The MoJ warden indicated that the GOI had not yet decided what future use the facility would have; a decision would be made based on security conditions in Iraq over a six to eight month timeframe.

IRAQI ARMY SOLDIERS OFFER VIEWS

¶5. (C) Iraqi Army soldiers told PolOff that they felt confident about their security responsibilities at Abu Ghraib, despite its violence-prone past and proximity to dangerous neighborhoods. One soldier remarked, "It does not matter if we are assigned to Abu Ghraib, Ramadi, Fallujah - all are the same." Several urged that the coalition continue to focus on preventing militia activity. One IA officer said bluntly, "we are stronger than the militias and the parties that control them. This is the same army that fought Iran for ten years." Another said his unit favored inclusion of Sunni-Arabs into the army. One said that Abu Ghraib remained a troubling marker in the minds of Iraqis, both under Saddam Hussein and based on CF abuses there: "no one likes what this place represents in the mind."

¶6. (C) COMMENT: The transfer of Abu Ghraib marks a key transition, symbolic and substantive. The prison is located in a volatile suburb of Baghdad; it remains a possible target for future insurgent and terrorist attacks. The IA unit charged with the site's security appears prepared for this task. The usual logistical support issues (food, generators, fuel, medical, quick reaction force, etc.) will require, however, some CF assistance until MoD supplies and services are on-line. MoJ officials noted that repairs at Abu Ghraib are being made in line with prison standards - whether or not the GOI eventually decides to reopen the notorious site for that purpose. END COMMENT.
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